

NATURALIZATION OF CERTAIN WORLD WAR VETERANS

JANUARY 28, 1926.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. BACON, from the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H. R. 7176]

The Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 7176) to supplement the naturalization laws by extending certain privileges to aliens who served honorably in the military or naval forces of the United States during the World War, having had the same under consideration, reports it back to the House without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

This bill will renew for the benefit of aliens who served honorably in our military or naval forces during the World War special exemptions providing for expeditious naturalization that were granted such aliens by war-time legislation which by limitation expired on March 3, 1924. Under former legislation, carried in the act of May 9, 1918, and in the sundry civil appropriation act of July 19, 1919, these alien war veterans were privileged to petition for citizenship in the most convenient court having naturalization jurisdiction. They were afforded immediate hearing by appearance before a naturalization examiner without first meeting the necessity of filing declarations of intentions or payment of fees, which usual requirements were waived. Upon proof of their right to receive such privileges, these aliens were afforded every facility for expeditious naturalization, conditioned on their ability to meet all the tests demanded by law of petitioners for citizenship.

The privileges to be extended by this bill are limited to those aliens, not ineligible to citizenship, who served honorably in the military or naval forces of the United States at any time after April 5, 1917, and before November 12, 1918, or during the time of actual hostilities, and who were not discharged from such forces because of alienage.

While there are no accurate figures as to the number who might avail themselves of the provisions of this bill, it may be interesting to

know the number of alien war veterans of the United States who took advantage of the war-time legislation to become citizens. The Bureau of Naturalization reports the following numbers, by years:

1918	63, 993
1919	128, 335
1920	51, 972
1921	17, 636
1922	9, 468
1923	7, 109
1924	10, 170

288, 683

It has been developed before the committee that there are still many aliens who served honorably in our armed forces during the World War who, because of various reasons, did not or could not take advantage of the war-time preference legislation. Many aliens were under the mistaken apprehension that service in the armed forces of the United States automatically gave them citizenship. Indeed, it has been represented to the committee that many of these aliens were given the misguided advice that such service gave them citizenship, and that there are many of them living to-day who, having acted on that advice, believe themselves to be citizens. And there are other alien war veterans who are still undergoing treatment or who have but comparatively recently emerged from invalidism because of injuries received in the service, and who have never been able to complete their naturalization.

The privileges to be extended by this bill will be for a period of five years from the date of its enactment. It is believed that this will be sufficient time to take care of all such cases of aliens who are desirous of becoming citizens. Without this legislation these aliens will have to meet the requirements of the naturalization laws as to filing of declarations of intentions, length of residence, and payment of fees, and they would suffer a great disadvantage compared with those aliens who were able to take advantage of the war-time preference legislation and whose service in our military forces was no more meritorious.

It is believed that the privileges given by this bill are but a measure of simple justice to those aliens who did not use the shield of their alienage to avoid service in our forces and who because of various reasons were unable to seize the opportunity for expeditious naturalization previously accorded. These aliens voluntarily met one of the greatest tests of patriotic citizenship. It is believed that every opportunity should be extended them so that they may without delay claim the rights of citizenship.

The American Legion, through appearance before the committee, declared itself heartily in favor of the bill and urged its speedy enactment into law. The committee was given a copy of the resolution passed at its seventh annual convention at Omaha, Nebr., as follows:

Be it resolved by the seventh annual convention of the American Legion, That Congress be requested to enact legislation extending the naturalization time limit for honorably discharged veterans of the World War so they may be granted naturalization without fee.